Amendments to the Claims

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1(currently amended). A product management method for managing products, product parts, and identifiers associated with the products and product parts, and for monitoring and controlling operations during a repair of a device or site containing the products or product ~~parts, wherein the identifiers and associated material master data are stored in a database~~ parts, the method which comprises:

providing a database with identifiers and associated material master data stored therein, the identifiers being unique serial numbers and serial number combinations;

generating a first database extract representing the device or site to be repaired from the database, the extract containing the ~~identifiers~~ unique serial numbers or serial number combinations and associated material master data including warranty data of the device or site;

generating a symbol or an image from the data of the first database extract, the symbol or image being displayable on an input and output device and storable in an image data memory;

inputting one or more serial numbers of the device or of the site into the input and output device for data adjustment;

removing the product or product part to be repaired as a repair part and inputting the spare part, with the ~~identifier~~ unique serial numbers or serial number combinations, into the input and output device and storing the information;

determining whether or not a warranty case is in the database with respect to the repair part;

delivering the repair part to a vendor as a warranty case or as a repair case without warranty, whereupon the vendor returns the part as a new part or as a repaired part;

supplying the repair part to inventory stock via a goods receipt module;

generating an altered image and generating an altered database extract corresponding to the repaired device or site from said altered image; and

storing the altered database extract in the database memory.

Claim 2 – 3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (currently amended). A data processing system for managing products, product parts, and identifiers associated with the products and product parts, and for monitoring and controlling operations during a repair of a device or site containing the products or product parts, wherein the identifiers in the form of unique serial numbers and serial number combinations and associated material master data are stored in a database and warranty data form part of the database, the system comprising:

a processing module for providing a first database extract associated with the device or site to be repaired from the database, the first database extract containing the identifiers and associated material master data of the device or site;

a processing module for creating a symbol or image from data of the first database extract and storing in an image data memory, wherein the symbol or image is configured for display on an input and output device;

at least one input and output device configured for input of one or more ~~identifiers~~ unique serial numbers or serial number combinations of the device or the site for the purpose of data adjustment;

a processing module enabling a product or product part to be repaired to be removed as a repair part, whereupon ~~an identifier~~ a unique serial numbers or serial number combination of a spare part is input into said input and output device and stored;

a processor for generating an altered image and for generating an altered database extract corresponding to the repaired device or site from the altered image; and

a device for storing the altered database extract in the database memory.

Claim 5 (canceled).

Claim 6 (original). The system according to claim 4, wherein said processor module and said device for storing are contained in a single system module.

Claim 7 (original). The data processing system according to claim 4, wherein the system is configured to:

determine whether or not a warranty case is present in the database with respect to the repair part;

deliver the repair part to the vendor as a warranty case or as a repair case without warranty and forwarded by the vendor as a new part or a repaired part;

supply the repair part to inventory stock a goods receipt module and to store in the data memory; and

store new warranty data of the repair part in the data memory.

Claim 8 (original). The data processing system according to claim 4 implemented as a distributed system with a plurality of modules and at least one mobile input and output device.

Claim 9 (original). A computerized warranty management system, comprising a plurality of modules configured to perform the method according to claim 1.

Claim 10 (original). A computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions for performing the method according to claim 1.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1, 4, 6-10 remain in the application. Claims 1 and 4 have been amended. Claims 2, 3, and 5 have been canceled.

More specifically, the subject matter of claims 2 and 3 has been incorporated into claim 1 and the subject matter of claim 5 has been incorporated into claim 4.

We now turn to the art rejection, in which claims 1-10 have been rejected as being obvious over Bjornson (US 6,505,145 B1) in view of Hawman et al. (US 2003/0040826 A1, hereinafter "Hawman") under 35 U.S.C. § 103. We respectfully traverse with reference to the amended claims.

The primary reference Bjornson is written in very general terms and its "disclosure" is quite voluminous. On the other hand, it is directed to very specific subject matter and to a very specific implementation, namely, to a device for analyzing mechanical seals for pumps and similar rotating equipment with regard to their error behavior. The object is to thereby determine the root cause of the failure mode and also to provide for solutions to the problem. In order to enable such analysis, Bjornson registers the various possible errors in a database and, by searching the database, a variety of actually occurring errors may be associated with certain equipment or with its product identifier.

Much in contrast with Bjornson, applicant is not concerned with error analysis and error determination. Only very basic information is necessary in order to gain information whether or not a product, which forms a component of an assembly that consists of several components, must or should be exchanged. A typical example, in this context, is a telephone transmission facility (e.g., a base station), which is located at a remote location and which consists of several hundred or thousands of individual parts. Each of these parts carries its individual serial number, as assigned by the supplier. A technician, who is called upon to repair the facility, may now obtain a complete list from the central database which contains the exact components of the specific transmission plant, including the individual serial numbers. Upon repair/exchange, the database is updated with the new serial number(s).

According to claim 1, as amended, we also add a complete "warranty management" sequence into the process.

It is important to note that, in the claimed invention, all of the activity occurs with reference to the serial numbers that are provided by the part suppliers. The technician, on the other hand, who is called upon to repair the facility, is exposed to the complicated and cumbersome serial number system only marginally, and only with regard to a control management process. In light of the fact that the claimed process generates a symbol or image of the data, the technician need only move an icon or the like on the screen of his/her portable computer. The symbol or image displayed on the computer thereby represent the various products and their identifiers (i.e., serial numbers and/or serial number combinations).